Age Without Birth Certificates: The ʿĀʾishah Question and the Methodology of Premodern Dating

Was Lady Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) nine or nineteen years old when the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) married her?

Here is the decisive word.

Thaer Salameh

Read to the end, for -by Allah's permission- I will bring you what will delight your hearing and gladden your sight!

Executive Summary

This study addresses a question often framed in stark, modern terms: **Was Lady Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) nine or nineteen when the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) married her?** The investigation shows that the issue cannot be reduced to a single "certain" number without first deciding **which kind of historical input is being treated as definitive**, and without recognizing how early Islamic-era societies -and their documentation practices- actually handled age.

The analysis identifies **two primary evidentiary pathways**. The first relies on **authenticated hadith chains** in the major ṣaḥīḥ collections, which report a consummation age in the **nine-year range** (often specified as approximately **nine years and several months**). The second relies on **historical/sīrah reconstructions** that derive older estimates (commonly **13–23**, and in some modern treatments **up to 25**) through arithmetic based on reported dates and relative-age claims, especially those tied to the life of her sister Asmaʾ and to death-year ranges. However, the study finds that these reconstructions frequently rest on **multiple interdependent assumptions**, so that instability in any one premise (death year, "about seventy," age-at-Hijrah, exact age gap, year of consummation) can shift the conclusion by **a decade or more**.

The central outcome is methodological: **early-age reporting was often not documentary** in the modern bureaucratic sense. It commonly operated through **event-based memory** and later calendrical anchoring (notably after the formal adoption of Hijrah dating under Umar ibn al-Khattab). Therefore, numerical divergence in historical materials is best understood as reflecting **the era's time-keeping ecology**, not as a straightforward indictment of transmission.

In addition, the study highlights an often-overlooked linguistic–hadith dimension that materially affects how the reports are read. "I was shown you in a dream for three nights: an angel came to me with you in a piece of silk, and he would say: 'This is your wife/ your WOMAN, your Mar'ah.' Then I would uncover your face, and there you were, and I would say: 'If this is from Allah, He will bring it to pass.'" Agreed upon Hadith.

Classical lexicography states that **al-marʾah ("woman") is the feminine counterpart of al-marʾ/al-rajul ("man") and is a term used for an adult female**, just as "man" is not applied indiscriminately to any male, since Arabs would not call a child "a man" but rather "a boy" (ghulām) or "a child" (ṣabī).

In this usage, “man” signals **full competence and mature capacity**, and by the same logic “woman” signals a female who has attained **a recognized level of maturity and eligibility**, not merely biological sex. The distinction matters because many legal (sharʿī) and historical expressions are **capacity-coded**: the selection of “woman/man” is not neutral wording but can imply an **age–competence rank** separating the mature from the immature, and those upon whom responsibility is placed from those who have not yet reached that stage. Accordingly, the study treats the hadith language that employs such terms as a **contextual indicator** relevant to assessing eligibility, and not as a purely interchangeable label.

Closing Statement on the Study’s Core Outcome

The overarching outcome of this study is that **projecting modern expectations of precise birth-dating and age-certification onto early historical contexts is a methodological mistake**. The premodern environment did not possess the bureaucratic tools that make “age” a stable, document-based datum today (birth certificates, unified civil registration, standardized calendars, and consistent year-counting across institutions). Instead, the study documents that the dominant mechanisms by which ages were approximated in earlier periods were **deeply probabilistic**, often constructed through **event-linking memory** and retrospective anchoring to major milestones. Such mechanisms can -by their very nature- fail to distinguish seasons from years in a consistent way, may compress multiple years into a single remembered “year,” or, conversely, may spread one year across two perceived intervals. In other words, the “inputs” used to calculate ages were frequently **not rigid numerical facts**, but **recollections**, “about/near” estimations, and event-based correlations.

On this basis, the study argues that treating a single age figure -such as “nine”- as if it were necessarily a modern-style, documentary number carrying decisive intellectual weight is not methodologically warranted. The same historical ecology that can yield a “nine” estimate can, without any logical or methodological breach, also allow other transmitted materials to generate older estimates that may plausibly extend to **approximately nineteen**. This is not an attempt to negate hadith transmission nor to discredit historical reports; rather, it is a clarification of the evidentiary landscape: **the numerical spread is a predictable product of the era’s time-keeping structure**, not a sign of fraud, and not something that can be adjudicated by importing modern administrative standards into a world that did not operate with them.

Accordingly, the study concludes that the question of Lady Aisha’s age at marriage should **not** be forced into contemporary ideological categories -such as “early marriage” framed by modern civil law, or polemical accusations that seek to indict Islam through anachronistic metrics. Once the nature of early age-estimation is correctly understood, the controversy largely shifts from being a moral or political weapon to being what it actually is: **a historical-method question about how premodern societies approximated ages**. The essence of the matter, therefore, is that the discussion cannot legitimately be treated as a clear-cut, modern-precision dispute over a single fixed number; rather, it belongs to a context where age was often **approximate**, **capacity-sensitive**, and **not recorded with today’s administrative exactness**, which dissolves much of the contemporary polemical force attached to the issue.

Chapter 1: Young Leadership and Heavy Responsibility in History and Early Islam:

At the age of seventeen, **Muhammad ibn al-Qasim al-Thaqafi** was the general commander of the armies that conquered the land of Sindh (present-day Pakistan)!

At the age of fourteen, **Muhammad al-Fatih** (Mehmed the Conqueror) was the overall ruler of the Ottoman state, at the height of its raging wars.

And at the age of twenty-one, he was the commander of an army numbering a quarter of a million soldiers, to bring the Eastern Byzantine Empire to an end and conquer Constantinople, with war plans that would astonish the greatest generals of today's world, given the capabilities of that era!

Usama ibn Zayd led the army of the Muslims heading to fight the greatest empire on earth at the time: the Romans.

He was eighteen years old, and he was responsible, within the army, over senior Companions.

The very existence of **Islam** and the **Islamic State** hinged upon the outcome of that campaign led by Usama, in the midst of the perilous movement of apostasy. And yet, Usama remained the commander of the army despite the gravity of the mission!

The first to unsheathe his sword in Islam was **al-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwam**, and he was fifteen years old at that time.

As for those who attained the honor of killing Abu Jahl, the Pharaoh of this الأمة (community), they were **Mu'awwidh ibn 'Afra'** and **Mu'adh ibn al-Jamuh**, and they were fourteen years old.

And **Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas** was seventeen years old when the Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) said to him: "This is my maternal uncle, so let each person show me his maternal uncle!"

The most dangerous mission in history -**Compiling the Qur'an** and writing it down- was assigned to **Zayd ibn Thabit**, who had memorized the **Book** while his age had not exceeded eleven, and learned **Hebrew** in seventeen nights, becoming the translator of the Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him). He was the one authorized to compile the Qur'an in the era of al-Siddiq, a supreme reference, and he was approximately twenty-one years old when he compiled the Qur'an.

And **Harun al-Rashid** was the commander of the army of the **Abbasid State** at the age of fifteen.

As for the most dangerous gatherings of Islam -where Islam was studied, and the da'wah (call) was planned, and its secret and public activities were organized- they took place in the house of **al-Arqam ibn Abi al-Arqam**, and he was thirteen years old!

Ali ibn Abi Talib (may Allah be pleased with him) accepted Islam at the age of six, leaving the religion of his father by choice and willingly, and he did not consult his father about that; because one does not consult anyone regarding the matter of **Allah**!

And when Abu Dharr arrived to Makkah -in the famous story- in order to see the Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) and listen to him, and he spent three days with an empty stomach, afraid to ask about the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), Ali -at six years of age- came to him to host him and invite him to food in his home, because he was a stranger!

And when he learned that he was asking about the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), he instructed him to follow him: if Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) sensed danger, he would give him a signal so that he would not follow him; otherwise, he would take him to the Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him). Extraordinary sharpness, awareness of serious matters, and weighty responsibilities, at the age of six!

Chapter 2: Early Scholarly Maturity: Transmission, Authorship, and Legal Authority:

Among the most striking points that silences the commotion around "age-mentality" among the early generations is this: the most famous route by which **Sahih Muhammad ibn Isma'il al-Bukhari** reached us -and the route through which it spread most widely- was through the narration of **Muhammad ibn Yusuf al-Firabri**. He was born in (231 AH), and he heard "al-Jami' al-Sahih" from al-Bukhari in (248 AH), meaning when he was seventeen years old! Then he heard it once again in (253 AH). So, if this "greatest book in its field" was borne (transmitted/received) by its most famous transmitter at the age of seventeen, by what logic can earlier eras be faulted for entrusting young people with carrying knowledge, narration, and responsibility?

And so that it is not said, "That is transmission, not authorship," then listen to this: the biographical scholars mention that Muhammad ibn Isma'il al-Bukhari began authoring early, and that when he was eighteen years old he wrote "Kitab al-Tarikh" at the قبر النبي ﷺ (the Prophet's grave), meaning he began a foundational, massive scholarly undertaking before he even reached twenty. Did that generation measure "eligibility" by precise birth-years the way we do today? Or did they measure it by aptitude, intellect, and memorization?

And among the evidences that topple the idea that "age is a fixed criterion of eligibility" in the contemporary mind is that **Muhammad ibn Idris al-Shafi'i** was granted permission to issue fatwa when he was around fifteen years old, by the Mufti of Mecca, **Muslim ibn Khalid al-Zanji**, in the best-known biographical reports. This is not a "moralizing anecdote," but an indication that the scholarly environment saw eligibility in acquisition and aptitude, not in reaching a specific numerical age.

Chapter 3: The Unmatched Status of Lady Aisha and Her Role in Preserving Half the Religion:

All the achievements of these great figures, and their contributions to Islam -despite their magnitude and importance- can scarcely be compared to the tremendous achievements of one of the greatest brilliant minds in the **History of Islam**; the mind from which we took half of Islam, half of the religion that carried the Arabs from bedouinism and جاهلية (pre-Islamic ignorance): barefoot shepherds of sheep, some raiding others and enslaving the women of others, and burying their daughters alive, Islam carried them from that condition to rule half the **Globe** in less than a hundred years, thanks to the concepts of this **Religion** and its intellectual power.

It was a tremendous favor that the **Revelation** never descended upon the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) while he was under a blanket with any of his wives, except her!

Al-Zuhri said: If the knowledge of Aisha were gathered together with the knowledge of all women, Aisha's knowledge would be superior.

Ibn Kathir said: "There was not among the nations anyone like Aisha in her memorization, knowledge, eloquence, and intellect."

And al-Dhahabi says: "The most learned of the women of the الأمة Community of Islam absolutely; and I do not know, in the nation of Muhammad -indeed, not among women at all- any woman more knowledgeable than her."

Al-Hafiz al-Dhahabi said: The musnad of Aisha reaches two thousand two hundred and ten hadiths. Al-Bukhari and Muslim agreed upon one hundred and seventy-four hadiths from her, al-Bukhari alone narrated fifty-four, and Muslim alone narrated sixty-nine.

And 'Urwah ibn al-Zubayr says: "I have not seen anyone more knowledgeable in fiqh, nor in medicine, nor in poetry than Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her."

The كبار الصحابة (senior Companions) would refer back to her when a calamity occurred or when they needed a fatwa in major incidents and situations; and she corrected many of them regarding what they narrated from the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), with precision and exactness, by virtue of a memory that did not omit a single letter.

Ibn al-Qayyim said: Among her unique merits -may Allah be pleased with her- is that the كبار (senior) Companions -may Allah be pleased with them- if something from the religion became unclear to them, they would seek her fatwa and they would find its knowledge with her.

And Imam Badr al-Din al-Zarkashi said in "al-Ijabah": "What Aisha corrected upon the Companions is not to be rejected."

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) passed away between her chest and her neck,
and Allah joined his saliva with her saliva at his death (peace and blessings be upon him).

Chapter 4: The Two Approaches to the Age Question:

When research is undertaken concerning the age of Lady Umm ʻAbd Allah (may Allah be pleased with her) when the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) married her, people are two groups:

A group proceeds from the establishment of authentic chains in the books of Sahih collections that transmitted her age as nine years when the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) consummated the marriage with her, and they judge all other reports in light of these **Hadiths** reports that appear in other historical books, which did not receive the same level of rigorous verification and study that hadith received, through detailed isnad analysis.

And a group studies the reports found in books of history and sīrah, and they perform mathematical calculations from which it appears that her age ranged between thirteen and twenty-three years at the time of her marriage to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him).

However, the second group collides with the contradiction of the numbers upon which they rely, when these are compared with the year of birth and death of Lady Asma' bint Abi Bakr (her sister), the age difference between them, and the year of birth and death of Lady **Aisha** (may Allah be pleased with her), and her age at death.

Therefore, the numbers conflict in a way that produces a gap exceeding ten years between estimates.

Chapter 5: Why the Historical Numbers Diverge: Detailed Breakdown of the Calculations:

Let us enter into some detail:

The matter is not a single, agreed-upon number: modern studies have estimated the age of the Mother of the Believers (may Allah be pleased with her) at marriage as ranging from 13 to 25 years; this alone shows that these numbers are not definitive but estimative.

Even within the historical reports themselves, there is explicit fluctuation: Aisha's death is mentioned as between 57 and 59 AH, with a statement that she "approached seventy." So, when calculations are built upon "approaching" and upon a time range (57–59) rather than a single year, differing derived ages naturally result.

The first calculation rule (death year + "approached seventy") produces more than one outcome:

If it is said: she died near seventy, and it is said: her death was 57–59 AH, then the age at death is itself not precisely fixed, and thus the birth year produced by subtraction is not precisely fixed; and as the starting point differs, the outcome differs.

Rather, add to that: it was said her age at death was about 63 years (meaning her age at marriage approximately 8 years), and it was said her age at death was about 66 years, meaning her age at marriage 11 years, and thus we find that the history books themselves also conflict in the numbers. Imagine that it is said her age was 63 and narrators transmit that she "approached seventy": meaning a gap of seven years was not significant to them in documentation! And in a narration in Ibn Majah,

the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) died while she was a girl of eighteen years; and al-Hakim in al-Mustadrak narrated that she died in the year 58 AH, so the approximate arithmetic result would be in the mid-sixties!

This cannot be understood except by recognizing that the matter of exact age at birth and at death was not regarded with the kind of attention we have today, because it was not among the issues of that era, not because of weak documentation!

The second calculation rule (age difference with Asma') depends on disputed numbers as well:
Reports are transmitted that **Asma' bint Abi Bakr** was older than Aisha by ten years, and that she died at one hundred years old in 73 AH, and that her age at the Hijrah was 27 years. From the combination of these numbers one extracts: Aisha's age at the Hijrah (27 – 10) = 17, then one adds a year or two until the consummation, producing a result of 18–19 years as her age at marriage.

But the problem is that this chain stands upon three numerical assumptions (100 years / 73 AH / 27 years); if one of them becomes unstable, the entire outcome becomes unstable.

From here the size of the estimation gap becomes apparent: when combining (death 57–59 AH + "approached seventy" + Asma' difference + year of consummation after Hijrah), the result is not a single number but a spectrum of ages. That is why you have seen some conclude 14–15 years at marriage, some conclude 18, some conclude 19, and some widen it to 13–25.

The methodological reason behind this variance: these numbers are not dates written in "birth registries"; rather, they are estimations by narrators expressed with terms such as: approached, about, between, it was said, and they are tied to events (Hijrah, Badr, Shawwal…) more than they are tied to documents.

How do we derive a "more likely" age from these contradictions without claiming certainty?
We take the strongest three computational pathways from within the historical material itself:

1. **The Asma' pathway:** (Asma's age at Hijrah 27 – difference 10 = 17 at Hijrah, then + (one or two years until consummation)) → the result: Lady Aisha's age is 18–19 at marriage.
2. **The death pathway:** (death 57–59 AH) with ("approached seventy") produces an "approximate" birth shortly before the Prophetic mission, and thus an age at marriage falling within 15–19 depending on the year of consummation.
3. **The hadith-science pathway** yields that her age at marriage was approximately nine years and seven months.

Conclusion:

When the "inputs of calculation" themselves multiply (death year, age at death, age difference with Asma', year of consummation), the question no longer remains: is it 9 or 19? as a purely arithmetic question. Rather, it becomes: which set of numbers do we accept in the first place? Hence, what is closer in the attempt to reconcile the reports is: that age was not fixed with documentary exactness,

and that what is derived from the conflicting estimates is an approximate range, not a single, decisive number.

Chapter 6: Reconciling Reports and Explaining Why the Discrepancy Exists:

Now, how do we solve this problem?

Do we declare all history books wrong and strike their texts against the rigorously verified hadith texts?
And is the scientific value of history books zero, even though some who wrote them also worked in hadith, and some were towering scholars?

But then the question arises: how did these towering scholars not notice the contradictions in the calculations the way we noticed them when we compared their narrations?

The solution is clear and important:

It is that what is apparent is that age estimates were not precise in that time.

For the transmitted reports in which the year of birth and the year of death of Lady Asma' vary, and the varying estimates of the age difference between her and the Mother of the Believers, and the varying estimates regarding the year and age of the Mother of the Believers Lady Aisha at her death, despite the fact that her death or Lady Asma's death are important events that should not have such disagreement; yet disagreement did occur in determining the two years of their deaths, and they were at that time among the notable figures of the Muslim Community الأمـــة, so their deaths are not matters in which ignorance is "acceptable." Therefore the possibility of error in determining their birth years is even more deserving of the likelihood of error, since neither of them, at the time of birth, was an important figure whose birth would be tracked by narrators!

Thus, the conflict of reports casts shadows of doubt upon the accuracy of determining age in general in that era, not upon the truthfulness of the narrations, but because it was not an important issue.

Therefore, I see that we should say:

The age of Lady Umm 'Abd Allah at her marriage to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) is estimated as between nine as the lowest estimate and nineteen as the highest estimate, without certainty. This allows us to reconcile the many reports in history books with the hadith reports that specify an age.

The point is that the concepts and concerns of that era did not care about precise age as we do today. That is why no controversies were raised about her being young, far be it from her; she was born great, lived great, and died عظيمة (magnificent), may Allah be pleased with her, throughout eras and successive nations,

Until the present era came and people's concepts of age changed, as a result of the policies of Western civilization in shaping human concepts, making the person, **in most cases,** not productive, not

creative, and of no stature until he/she passes twenty five - thirty years of age, and occupying him/her in the early years of life with trivialities, such that he/she has no brilliant mentality, and no ambition except the bare minimum, and they call him/her "a teenager"!

He spends the day behind electronic games, so they cannot imagine someone like him as a commander of armies nor as a maker of policies.

So, the spotlight was thrown on those narrations through the lens of the concepts of this time, in comparison with today's youth and their daughters.

We opened the article with a study showing how those who were in the bloom of their age -between six and twenty-one- were entrusted with persons, events, and missions of extreme danger, which they carried out with unparalleled success, something we cannot imagine being entrusted to those of the same ages among today's young men and women!

Imagine, for example, that the American army were to assign the task of leading its general staff in a war against China, for instance, to a fifteen-year-old youth, and entrust him with the task of making all decisive, existential decisions in that war!

Imagine that a girl of eleven years of age were to shoulder the making of state policies in economic and social spheres!

Did Lady Aisha not play the role of the highest reference authority in understanding half of the religion upon which a state was built that encompassed half the world -while she was in the age of blossoms- and with unparalleled success?

The problem is that we judge matters from 1400 years ago with today's mentality and today's perspective.

Girls of a time in which one would be born into a harsh environment and bear household responsibilities from the earliest fingernails, and grow up, mature, and become fully formed at a very early age, in desert conditions that made her a woman even at the age of nine.

Today they tell you: "Teenager!" And a girl does not even know how to make a simple tomato-fry until she graduates from university!

A time in which people's gaze was not fixed upon age the way it is today: it was all estimates tied to major events: he was born in the Year of the Elephant, he died around such-and-such a year.

Chapter 7: The "Age Recording" Problem Historically: Biography Research, Anthropology, and Civil Registration:

And so that you place your hand on the root of the problem in "calculating ages" historically: researchers of biographies explicitly state that some major imams did not know their birth dates (years) precisely because entire environments dated by events, not by years. It is mentioned, for example, about Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari that he did not know his birth year specifically, because it was not the custom of his people to "date by years." If that was the general environment of documentation, it is natural that numerical estimates of ages for major figures would vary from one

source to another, without that meaning "lying," but rather a difference in the very tools of time-keeping and time-fixing.

In demographic/anthropological literature connected to population history, the precision of age itself is considered "a relatively modern piece of information" when the tools of bureaucratic statehood are absent: when there are no mandatory birth registries, people tend toward estimation and approximation, linking ages to major milestones (the year of an incident, the time of a ruler, before/after a migration…) rather than to fixed numbers. Among the strongest methodological evidences for this is what researchers call **Age Heaping** (piling/heaping of ages): the tendency to report ages as round numbers (20, 25, 30…) instead of the true age, an indicator known to show that "age" in many societies in the past was not known or brought to mind with stable numerical precision as we do today.

Therefore, historians connect this transformation to the rise of mandatory civil registration and modern identity documents. In England and Wales, for example, the tracking of births and deaths officially through the state has existed since 1837, and thus "year of birth" became part of a fixed administrative system, whereas before that information was often taken from scattered records that were not unified in nature or coverage. The same trajectory appears in Canada as well: official references confirm that civil registration did not become unified early across all provinces, and that religious community records long remained a primary source before the completion of modern governmental frameworks.

In this sense: when we read age estimates in the early centuries, the methodological default is not to accuse the narrations, but to realize that the environment of documentation itself permitted wide variance in numbers, and that our transition today to "age as a binding number" is the fruit of a later administrative-civilizational transformation.

If you want to know precisely the era in which the poets of the Jahiliyyah lived, and how old they were before Islam, you will not be able to assert anything with certainty.

The War of al-Basus, despite its enormity and despite the intense interest of earlier historians in recording events in the Jahiliyyah, we find some historians making its end close to the Year of the Elephant, around 570 CE; some modern references provide a more specific time range indicating it lasted about forty years, approximately 494–534 CE. Philip Hitti mentions it occurred "around the end of the fifth century CE," while others say: it began approximately in the late 490s and ended in the early/mid 530s. If a major war like the War of al-Basus, -one that shook the Arabian Peninsula for decades- does not yield agreement among historians on a specific date for its beginning or end, such that some date it "late fifth century" and others by numbers stretching between the 490s and the 530s, then this alone reveals the nature of temporal awareness in those eras: dating by approximation, not exact designation; by range, not by a single number.

And in such a climate, it becomes natural that age estimates vary, especially the ages of those born before they became "notable figures." A year is estimated, and with it the age is estimated; and error may increase or decrease according to the narrator and the contextual clue.

Therefore, the presence of a difference in estimating the age of Lady Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) ranging between nine and nineteen is not astonishing to one who knows the nature of historical dating at that time, because it is an expected result of an environment that did not fix ages by documents, nor by birth certificates, nor by annual celebrations! Nor did it refine them by standardized numbers; rather, it often referred them to conjectures derived from general events and circulating estimates.

These estimates were not important to them as they are important to us today!

That is why the scholars of hadith did not focus on them with the kind of meticulous scrutiny -nor did the historians- because they did not live in our century for these issues to become important!

When the poet says: "I have wearied of the burdens of life; and whoever lives eighty years -no father to you!- will weary," he does not mean that his age is exactly eighty; rather: I have become old and reached the most debased stage of age, so I have grown weary of life.

Take an example from the leading figures of the Jahiliyyah themselves: Imru' al-Qays -too famous to need introduction- encyclopedic sources describe him as "an Arab poet of the sixth century" without fixing a precise year of birth or death, and other sources state that the details of his life are "difficult to determine" because the narratives were oral and because the environment did not know precise historical recording in the later sense. If this is the case with one of the foremost poets of the Jahiliyyah, then what about something even more precise than that; such as estimating ages?

One of the most precise indicators of the nature of temporal consciousness among the Arabs before Islam -and even in the earliest Islamic period- is that "age" was not, in most cases, a documentary number extracted from a reliably recorded birth register. Rather, it was typically inferred from the memory of events and from recurring seasons that were recalled and used for estimation.

Thus, when **Ṭarafah ibn al-ʿAbd al-Bakrī** -one of the most eminent poets of the Muʿallaqāt- was killed, his sister **al-Kharnāq** elegized him in verse, saying:

We counted for him twenty-six pilgrimages; and when he had completed them, he stood forth a mighty master.

This text is not merely a poetic lament. It is a methodological witness to a way of counting years: his age was estimated by retrospectively enumerating the pilgrimage seasons from his birth until his death -so that one might say, "In last year's ḥajj such-and-such happened, and in the ḥajj of the year before it such-and-such happened…" until twenty-six pilgrimages are counted, and the age is thereby estimated as twenty-six years.

Yet this method -despite its apparent simplicity and ease of circulation- is surrounded by wide possibilities of error, because it depends on anchoring memory to events that lack a stable annual reference point. There was no comprehensive "standard calendar" to which one could return, nor any "year zero" upon which years were systematically built, as would later occur in the chronologies of nations. Memory pointed to seasons and reports, not to an officially fixed count; and with each step in the chain of recollection, precedence and delay, confusion, and conflation could occur. "The year"

might be mixed with "the season," two years might be merged into one, or a single year might be split into two, especially when the span is long and the accounts circulate widely on people's tongues.

This, in itself, sheds a clarifying light on what occurs in estimating ages in the early Islamic period, among them, what relates to estimating the age of the Mother of the Believers **ʿĀ'ishah** (may Allah be pleased with her). For adopting Hijrah-based dating was not established as an official, binding calendar until the time of **ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb** (may Allah be pleased with him). Consequently, many major events that occurred before the codification of the calendar -or in its earliest years- were later reattached to the Hijrah as a reference point: it was said, for example, "Fasting was prescribed in year X after the Hijrah," and it was said, "The Prophet ﷺ consummated the marriage with ʿĀ'ishah in the first year," or "in the second year after the Hijrah." This linkage, in many instances, is not transmission from a "register," but a temporal reconstruction drawn from memory: it may be correct or mistaken, and it may vary from one narrator to another depending on the clues he received and on the network of events he was able to connect.

From here the sensitivity of reasoning from scattered chronological remarks within the reports becomes apparent. For example, multiple views were transmitted regarding the revelation of Sūrat al-Qamar: it was said to have been in the fourth year after the beginning of the mission, and it was said the fourth year before the Hijrah, and it was said in the tenth year of the mission. And it is established in an authentic hadith that ʿĀ'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said that at the time of its revelation she was a "jāriyah." This term -beyond its breadth in Arabic usage- also indicates here an awareness of the surrounding circumstances, not merely a bare age label; for she mentions the incident in a way that suggests comprehension and context. If we suppose that the sūrah was revealed early in the mission, and that the "awareness" she describes typically does not occur except after a certain age, then the calculation that links the date of revelation to the date of marriage could yield an age different from what might be assumed if one treats all the chronological inputs as definitively fixed at every link in the chain.

The methodological conclusion is this: calculating ages by tying them to events is, by its nature, a conjectural method, and by virtue of its structure it produces large margins of error. This does not impugn the truthfulness of the reports, nor undermine the integrity of their transmitters, nor require accusing those who conveyed them. Rather, it places the reader before a clear historical reality: the structure of that era did not treat age as a "documentary number" measured with modern arithmetic precision, but as an estimate extracted from seasons, events, and narrations. Therefore, imposing the demand for "standardized precision" upon that environment is not an intellectually fair scientific demand: how can the early generations be required to provide exact dates in the manner of modern state registries, when they did not possess a unified calendrical reference until a time after the events had occurred, and only then did systematic public dating begin in a relatively later form?

With this understanding, it becomes clear that differences in estimates are not a "gap in the narration," but a natural effect of an environment that dated by events rather than by numbers, and constructed timelines on recollection rather than on documents. Thus, when the numbers differ, they differ not because transmission is corrupt, but because the tools of fixing time were different from the outset.

Chapter 8: The Wisdom of the Marriage and the Prophetic Dream Narrative

Therefore, one should not impose today's concepts upon yesterday's issues that were not treated with the same concern.

So we say: the marriage of the Chosen One (peace and blessings be upon him) to that brilliant woman was because Allah Most High willed it for the good of this الأمة Islamic Community and for its need for that genius from whom we would take half the religion in the household of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him).

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said about Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her):

"I was shown you in a dream for three nights: an angel came to me with you in a piece of silk, and he would say: 'This is your wife/ your WOMAN, your Mar'ah.' Then I would uncover your face, and there you were, and I would say: 'If this is from Allah, He will bring it to pass.'" Agreed upon Hadith.

So he (peace and blessings be upon him) saw Jibril (Gabriel), peace be upon him, carrying Aisha in a "piece of silk," meaning: a piece of silk cloth. And revelation knew best when it described her by saying: "This is your woman." And in "al-Maghrib" in the arrangement of "al-Mu'rib" dictionary:

"Al-mar'ah (woman): the feminine of al-mar' (man/ Rajul), and it is a name for the adult (female), like 'man' (for the adult male)." Meaning: she was an adult woman.

This linguistic text indicates that, in original Arabic usage, the term **"woman" (al-mar'ah)** is not merely a biological counterpart to **"man" (al-rajul)**. Rather -as stated- it is a designation for an **adult female**, just as **"man"** is not a label applied to any male in an absolute sense. Arabs do not call a child "a man"; instead, they call him **a boy (ghulām)**, **a child (ṣabī)**, and the like, because, in their usage, "man" signifies **full legal and practical competence**, and the attainment of a level of **maturity, strength, and capacity** to carry what is assigned to adults in terms of affairs and responsibilities.

By the same measure, the term **"woman"** is used: it does not merely mean "female" as a type, but rather the female who has **attained the description of competence** and has passed beyond the status of a **little girl / young servant-girl (jariyah)** to the status of a **fully mature woman**.

The importance of this distinction becomes clear in understanding many legal (sharʿī) and historical expressions: the choice of the word **"woman"** or **"man"** is not neutral; it signals an **age- and capacity-based rank** that distinguishes between the mature and the immature, and between one upon whom obligation and responsibility are placed and one who has not yet reached that stage.

Accordingly, in this authentic hadith there is a precise description of Lady ʿĀ'ishah's (may Allah be pleased with her) **eligibility for marriage**: she is described as a woman of full competence, not a child, nor a mere young girl, but a fully mature woman. This follows from, and is required by, correct understanding of the Arabic language. It therefore provides a highly significant contextual indicator regarding the nature of Lady ʿĀ'ishah's age and eligibility for marriage, and that is the essence of the matter. And this is extremely important.

Chapter 9: The Medical Discussion: Why Numerical Age Alone Is Not the Only Criterion

Now we say: based on the most precise data of modern medicine:

Medically, age is not the sole "decisive factor" in estimating a girl's ability to bear the consequences of marriage; because what matters in medicine is not the bare number of years, but indicators of physical and psychological maturity. The first biological threshold for entering the stage of reproductive capability is the occurrence of puberty (among its signs: the onset of menstruation), but this alone is not sufficient to judge "readiness." Physicians look to the completion of skeletal and bodily growth (including pelvic growth), nutritional status, chronic illnesses, the ability for psychological and social adaptation, and the presence of a family support network that protects the girl from pressure and distress.

Moreover, the timing of puberty itself varies across environments and eras according to genetic, nutritional, and environmental factors. Scientific reviews have recorded "directional" shifts in the timing of puberty onset across decades, which indicates that "numerical age" does not always match "maturity age."

This is the summary of the "medical approach": biological capability may begin with puberty, but safety and sufficiency are not reduced to an age number; they are understood through a package of indicators of maturity and stability, while noting that today's recommendations are formulated for today's reality, and cannot be converted into an "individual diagnosis" for a specific historical person; rather, what is taken from them is to prove that age alone does not reveal the whole truth.

Chapter 10: Closing

And all praise is due to Allah, Lord of the worlds.

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Key Publications:

1. **Epistemology and Methods of Thinking and Reasoning** – A foundational reference for structuring Islamic inferential methodology. It explores the origins of knowledge, the distinctions between Islamic and Greek epistemologies, and deconstructs modern conceptions of science and reason. It reconnects experimental reasoning with the intellect and establishes an independent Islamic path of thought.
2. **The Origin of the Universe: A Rational, Scientific, and Sensory Proof for the Existence of the Creator** – Presents logical and scientific evidence that the universe arose not by chance but through meticulous design. It discusses physical laws, the principle of fine-tuning, and cosmic constants as proofs of a wise Creator.
3. **The Origin of Life: The Miracle of the Cell and the Proof of the Creator's Existence** – An analytical journey through the complexity of life from the first cell to the human being, demonstrating the impossibility of life

arising by chance. It refutes materialist and Darwinian theories and establishes the purposeful design of divine creation.

4. **The Moment of Creation: When Quantum Physics Halted** – A scientific rebuttal to "universe from nothing" theories. *(Available in Arabic and English.)*
5. **The Orbits of the Heavens: Miraculous Design and Astonishing Cosmic Secrets**.
6. **The Greatest Cosmic Secret** – How the ideal ratio 2.01 between quarks and the precise 1.293 MeV difference between the neutron and proton determine the fate of the entire universe. *(Available in Arabic and English.)*
7. **An Attempt to Interpret the Verse: "The heavens and the earth were a joined entity, and We separated them."** *(Available in Arabic and English.)*
8. **An Attempt to Interpret the Stages of Creation of the Heavens and Earth in Six Days** *(Available in Arabic and English.)*
9. **Spacetime: Between Philosophy and Science**
10. **Guidelines on Addressing the Divine Attributes of Allah, Exalted be He**
11. **The Black Box of Western Thought: The Crisis of the Modern State** – Islam, Democracy, Secularism, Liberalism, Capitalism: A Comparative Analysis of Foundational Ideas.
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